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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 002138

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STATE FOR WHA/CEN, WHA/PPC, WHA/USOAS, AND DRL/PHD
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: HONDURAN ELECTIONS NEWS: UPDATE 11

REF: (A) Tegucigalpa 2126

(B) Tegucigalpa 2125 and previous

Controversy Continues over Hernandez Candidacy

1. The Anticorruption Bar Association of Honduras has registered a complaint with the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Attorney General's Office denouncing the allegedly illegal manner in which the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) registered the candidacy for re-election of the current Secretary (Majority Whip) of Congress, Juan Orlando

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Hernandez. The president of the organization, Jose Avila, stated that Hernandez, a close associate of National Party presidential candidate Pofirio "Pepe" Lobo, is barred constitutionally from running for office because he is related to a magistrate in the Supreme Court.

National Party Calls for Straight Ticket Voting

2. President of the National Party Gilbert Goldstein said that National Party followers need to vote for the entire ticket of National Party candidates in their Departments so that the National Party is guaranteed winning the presidency and the Congress in the elections. He said the message is clear in the National Party: to win the November elections the individual vote is not acceptable. Goldstein said that the Party must be united and needs straight ticket voting, which will be crucial in congressional voting. The new Electoral Law, passed in May 2004, provides citizens with the option of voting for an individual and thus allows splitting congressional votes for the first time in Honduras.

Recovered ID Cards are Not Ones Stolen in 2004

3. National ID cards found recently scattered along a Tegucigalpa road do not belong to the batch of ID cards, some 14,000, stolen last year from the National Registry of Persons (RNP). However, the office of the Attorney General will continue to conduct investigations on this matter to decide if they were simply lost or if this has to do with theft. (See refs A-B for details.) RNP Director Mario Aguilar Gonzales, director of the RNP has already been called by the office of the Attorney General to testify on this matter, as well as a number of RNP employees and political activists. Some 778 IDs were found scattered on the side of the road. According to the press, 578 of these "lost" IDs had already been reissued by the RNP and 251 replacement IDs were used by voters in the February primary elections. Aguilar has promised that he will continue to investigate RNP employees for possible negligent behavior in the distribution of these personal documents.

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